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SOVIET GENERAL KONEV IN PRAGUE

SEE FURTHER SOVIETIZATION, THREAT TO BONN -- Zofingen, Schweizerische
Allgemeine Volkszeitung, 27 Jan 51

General Ivan Stepanovich Konev, Commander of Soviet Ground Forces, is in Czechoslovakia on a special mission. He commutes between the Hotel Carlton, his headquarters in Karlovy Vary, where he is taking the cure, and his residence in Dejvice, a suburb of Prague. In all probability, however, Konev will not make Karlovy Vary his long-term headquarters but will soon return from his Dejvice villa to his house in Moscow.

It would seem that Konev's mission in Prague has been erroneously compared with General Rokossovskiy's in Poland and Panchevskiy's in Bulgaria. After all, the general, in his military capacity, is far too important to the Kremlin to be loaned out to Cepicka and Gottwald, under the lend-lease law as applied to generals. His mission is more limited, yet at the same time more important, than Rokossovskiy's. He is, in effect, to eradicate the last vestiges of Czech military tradition, to Sovietize the "soul" of the Czech soldier. However, his most important mission is to act as a menace to Bonn.

For Konev, next to Zhukov, is to every German the man who punctured the illusion of German superiority over the Slavic masses. He is the commander who routed the Wehrmacht, he is the human steam-roller, the master of the irresistible avalanche of Soviet troops in World War II, and Moscow hopes that Germany will shrink back from remilitarization when the fear that Konev's hour has come, once more, grips the heart of her people.

Besides his mission of acting as a threat to Bonn, by his very presence a few kilometers from the German border, Marshal Konev also carries on his organizational work within the Czechoslovak Army. It is known that, at the instigation of Soviet Military Attache Gusev, new service regulations for Czech soldiers were put in effect, requiring the latter to shave their heads bare, sew USSR insignia on their uniforms, and observe the Soviet Army's strict rules on military salutes.

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At the same time, a great redeployment of officers has taken place, in the course of which Jaroslav Prochazka, a well-tried Communist general, replaced Commander-in-chief Simon Drgac, whose attitude toward the West was felt to be too friendly.

The Czechoslovak Republic, with its three military districts, Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, has over eight divisions. It is Konev's task to increase these eight divisions to 12, within one year, and to attach to them 11 independent artillery brigades, four air groups, and ten SNB (police) brigades.

Konev's presence in Czechoslovakia has been linked repeatedly with the sentencing of the Slovak bishops, and it has even been rumored that he has been charged with nipping in the bud any deviationist tendencies of Gottwald or of the newspapers Rude Pravo and Lidove Noviny. Undoubtedly, the presence of the famous and at the same time feared and respected marshal will contribute to the Stalinization of Czechoslovakia's political and military policies. Nevertheless, it would seem that Konev, who -- notwithstanding his Bolshevik past -- is regarded in the USSR as a relatively nonpolitical officer, is a man of such great importance that his presence in Prague can hardly be ascribed to the general combating of Titoist and deviationist elements. It is far more likely that Stalin is throwing him into the scales as a strategic weight, to counterbalance Eisenhower. -- John M. Year

SENTENCE THREE TO DEATH AS REVOLUTIONISTS -- Zurich, Neue Zuercher Zeitung, 19 Feb 51

On 17 February three people were condemned to death and 12 others sentenced to from one to 20 years' imprisonment. Jan Musil, Jindrich Jank, and Zdenek Profous, who were called the leaders of a revolutionary movement, were condemned to death in Chrudim for "terrorizing the People's Administration." Frantisek Kubelka and Bedrich Jank were sentenced to 20 and 18 years in prison, respectively. Six others, including three women, were sentenced to from one to 11 years' imprisonment.

The Prague State Court sentenced Jindrich Pavel to 17 and Otakar Hlubucek to 16 years' imprisonment for sabotaging the Five-Year Plan. Three others received sentences of from 18 months to 5 years in prison for the same offense.

In Velka Ves in Moravia four rich villagers were sentenced to from one to 3 years in prison for disturbing a Communist meeting.

In Ceska Lipa Josef Makovec, the director of a nationalized glass factory was arrested for "self-enrichment." A woman was arrested for adulterating milk in Nasolow [Nasilov?] in Bohemia, and two agricultural workers got 8 months in jail for "nonfulfillment of their duties" and "intended sabotage."

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